

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA graduate student committee: A year in review

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ASA, CSSA, and SSSA graduate student committee

2021 Annual Meeting

The Graduate Student Leadership Conference supported by the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) and hosted by the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA (ACS) Graduate Student Committee, is our highlight event each year. This two-day program runs the Saturday



and Sunday before the Annual Meeting and includes training in networking, leadership ethics, workplace conflict resolution, professional etiquette, communicating science, and interview tactics. In 2021, the Leadership Conference started off with a session on Leadership Ethics, where students learned what it means to be an ethical leader and how to navigate the challenges of being an ethical scientist and practice value-based leadership. Students then learned about business etiquette, which was followed by a casual evening social. The next day, students reconvened to learn about different leadership styles using their DiSC personality assessment results and then used their results to workshop some real-world conflict management scenarios.



Anna King from Brigham Young University speaks at the Graduate Student Leadership Conference during the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City in November.

The Networking Session, funded by Corteva, is the largest event hosted by the ACS Graduate Student Committee each year, and this year was one of our largest yet! More than 160 students and mentors from academia, industry, government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) met to get tips on networking in a post-pandemic world, and then broke out into small networking groups where they put those skills to the test. The graduate student social later that evening provided a more relaxed setting for networking with peers.

This year, we also brought back a session we first hosted at the 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting—"How to Ace an Interview." This session provided tips on how to manage behavioral interview questions and allowed students to practice and workshop their

responses to popular interview questions with one another. We also brought back an intermittent session on “Communicating Your Science” to train students on best communication practices, including using common values to foster connections with the audience and crafting a compelling message.

New this year, as part of the poster session “Social and Historical Contexts of Agronomy, Crop, and Soil Sciences: A Collaborative Effort to Foster Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” the Committee presented a poster highlighting actions it has taken to address justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Societies.

The Graduate Student Committee would like to thank our event sponsors, Corteva Agriscience and ASF, as well as our speakers and Society liaisons, Susan Chapman and Brigid Moran, for helping make this year's return to an in-person Annual Meeting a success!

Year-Round Committee Initiatives

This spring, we hosted our second webinar series: “**Level Up Your Career: From Graduate Student to Employment**,” which covered how to prepare your CV, build an online presence, prepare for job interviews, identify different employment opportunities, and negotiate a job offer. In the fall, we organized a second webinar series: “Communicating Your Science 101,” which focused on data analysis for storytelling, preparing for the Annual Meeting, and communicating your science in the media. Planning is already



A student participating in the leadership style DiSC assessment during the Graduate Student Leadership Conference.

underway for the spring 2022 webinar series—more information is available on the Societies' websites under the graduate student page.

We also continued to grow our Graduate Student Travel Grant program, and with the help of generous donors and matching funds from ASF, brought our fund total up to \$29,000! This year, we had more than 80 applicants apply for the travel grant to attend the 2021 Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. Our committee reviewed each applicant and awarded ELEVEN graduate students travel scholarships. To ensure that we are able to award travel grants annually, we have committed to raising enough funds to permanently endow the Graduate Student Travel Grant by 2025. We are continuing to seek donations, which will be matched by ASF (up to \$5,000 annually), until 2025. Our hopes are that this program will support graduate student attendance at future Annual Meetings and will increase the attendance of students with diverse perspectives to ASA, CSSA, and SSSA. If you would like to learn more about the scholarship or if you are interested in donating, please visit: www.a-s-f.org/content/graduate-student-travel-scholarship!

Looking Forward to 2022

In 2022, the Graduate Student Committee will finalize its Strategic Plan in an effort to keep building programs to support our graduate student members and to help foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Societies. The Committee will continue to host monthly webinars and produce graduate-student-focused content for CSA News magazine. We also look forward to



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<https://www.a-s-f.org/content/graduate-student-travel-scholarship>

   

supporting more graduate students with travel scholarships to the 2022 Annual Meeting in Baltimore. Follow us on Twitter ([@ACSGradStudents](https://twitter.com/ACSGradStudents)) and watch your emails for updates on graduate student events!



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